



**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPAREDNESS SPECIMEN PACKAGING, TRANSPORT,
COMPLETION OF REQUEST FOR TESTING FORM AND CHAIN OF CUSTODY FORM**

PLEASE notify the DPHL **prior** to collecting a sample to discuss specimen/sample type, to confirm testing methods available, and to coordinate transportation. This document is for *both* Biological Preparedness and Chemical Preparedness samples. Please review the appropriate section for the desired testing.

ALL PREPAREDNESS SAMPLES:

Chain of Custody: Each person who accepts custody of a legal sample also accepts responsibility for ensuring the security of that sample. If a legal sample is to be left unattended, it should always be stored in a locked compartment. When possible the sample transport container should also be locked or sealed (i.e. evidence tape) in a manner to detect tampering.

1. The submitter will complete the Chain of Custody form from the beginning of the page and ending with their signature and date in the "Received from" section (located just below the Test Requested section).
 - a. If submitting more than one environmental sample, also complete the Chain of Custody for Multiple
2. Environmental Preparedness Samples. Attach additional copies if necessary.
 - a. A separate Chain of Custody for Clinical Preparedness Samples form is necessary for each patient.
3. The submitter will complete the appropriate (clinical or environmental) Request for Preparedness Testing form. Only ONE Request is needed per **batch** of samples submitted. Submit clinical and environmental samples separately.
4. The completed Chain of Custody form, the appropriate Request for Preparedness Testing (Clinical or Environmental), and any other supporting documentation, should be sealed tightly in its own plastic zip-lock bag and attached to the exterior of the sample transport container.
5. Environmental), and any other supporting documentation, should be sealed tightly in its own plastic zip-lock bag and attached to the exterior of the sample transport container.
6. The submitter is responsible for ensuring sample security as long as the specimen is in their custody.
7. When the custody of the sample is transferred, each receiver will document sample receipt and release.
8. Copies of the chain of custody form may be provided to submitters, the original is retained with the sample.

Sample Transport: Samples may be delivered to the laboratory using any of the following methods:

1. Delivery by the Submitter: **Contact DPHL at 302.223.1520 prior to transport/delivery.**
2. DPHL courier: Call 302.223.1520 to arrange pickup. Please keep in mind that using the DPHL courier may increase transport time.
3. Professional Carrier: FedEx, DHL, or UPS. Specify rush delivery.
 - a. Use Packing Instruction 602 (Infectious Substances) for Biological Preparedness Samples.
 - b. Use Packing Instruction 650 (Diagnostic Specimens) for Chemical Preparedness Samples.

Biological Preparedness Samples:

Contact the Clinical Microbiology Section of DPHL at 302.223.1520.

Sample Packaging: Correctly preserving and preparing samples for transport is critical to ensuring the integrity of the sample and the safety of those handling these samples. Steps for preparing samples for transport are as follows.

1. The submitter should contact the Delaware Public Health Laboratory (DPHL) at 302.223.1520 to answer any questions related to any aspect of sample collection, preservation, packaging, and/or transport.
2. Samples must be labeled and tightly sealed in a container (blood tube, specimen cup, etc). Double bag the specimen in plastic biohazard bags or place in double mail container. Place biohazard label on container or bag if one if not present.



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Public Health
Laboratory

3. Place in a transport container, preferably a cardboard box made for shipment of infectious substances (available through Fisher, Allegiance or other lab supplier). Fill container with bubble wrap, Styrofoam peanuts, etc. to prevent breakage of sample. If ice or ice packs are necessary for transport, contain the ice so that leakage into specimen or out of the transport box is avoided.
4. Transport containers should be secured with evidence tape. **The signature of the person sealing the evidence and the date must be written across the seal in indelible ink.**
5. Mark **“Send to: Delaware Public Health Laboratory, 30 Sunnyside Road, Smyrna, Delaware 19977”** on the outside of the transport container. Attach chain of custody and request for testing forms to the box according to the instructions above.

Chemical Preparedness Samples:

Contact the Chemical Terrorism Section of DPHL at 302.223.1520.

Sample Packaging: Correctly preserving and preparing samples for transport is critical to ensuring the integrity of the sample and the safety of those handling these samples. Steps for preparing samples for transport are as follows:

1. The submitter should contact the Delaware Public Health Laboratory (DPHL) at 302.223.1520 to answer any questions related to any aspect of sample collection, preservation, packaging, and/or transport.
2. Clinical sample collection must follow CDC’s “Chemical Terrorism Event Specimen Collection”.
3. Follow packaging guidelines for clinical samples provided in the CDC document “Shipping Instructions for Specimens Collected from People Potentially Exposed to Chemical Terrorism Agents”.
4. Samples must be labeled and tightly sealed in a container (blood tube, specimen cup, etc.).
 - a. Follow Packing Instruction 650 (Diagnostic Specimens/Biological Substance Category B) for clinical samples.
 - b. Environmental samples must *minimally* be double bagged with the exterior decontaminated. Utilize drinking water sampling bottles for large volume samples.
2. Place biohazard label on container or bag if one is not present (clinical samples only).
3. The initials of the person sealing the evidence and the date must be across the seal of all tubes, containers, and bags in indelible ink.
5. At each step of packaging, all closure points (tube or cup, bags, boxes, containers, etc.) must be sealed with evidence tape with the collector’s initials written half on and half off the tape.
6. Place in a transport container, preferably a cardboard box made for shipment of infectious substances (available through Fisher, Allegiance or other lab supplier) that complies with Packing Instruction 650.
 - a. Fill container with enough sorbent to prevent breakage of sample. Contain ice packs or dry ice so that leakage into specimen or out of the transport box is avoided.
 - b. Urine samples must be frozen or freeze in shipment, dry ice is recommended.
 - c. Blood tubes must NOT freeze, but be chilled, ice packs are recommended.
 - d. Blood and urine *must* be packaged and shipped separately.
7. Transport containers should be secured with evidence tape. **The signature of the person sealing the evidence and the date must be written across the seal in indelible ink.**
8. Mark **“Send to: Delaware Public Health Laboratory, 30 Sunnyside Road, Smyrna, Delaware 19977”**, on the outside of the transport container. Attach chain of custody and request for testing form to the box.
9. Follow Packing Instruction 904 if using dry ice.
10. If directed to ship clinical samples to CDC:
 - a. Contact DPHL for further directions and shipping address.
 - b. Follow guidelines provided in the CDC document “Shipping Instructions for Specimens Collected from people Potentially Exposed to Chemical Terrorism Agents”.
 - c. Complete the Airway Bill if samples are being flown.